LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Left Unity

Founded 1921 Editor: R. Palme Dutt

AFTER THE SPECIAL TUC

The Editor

FORDS– THE FACTS

Moss Evans

ENGINEERS' STRIKE

Ernie Roberts

Brian Bunting on South Africa

Betty Ambatielos on Nato and Greece

Elaine Woolston on Overseas Students

Palme Dutt on the Second World War

APRIL 1971

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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GOVERNMENT POSTAL OFFENSIVE AND LABOUR MONTHLY

An Urgent Statement for the Attention of All Readers

The postal stoppage from January 18 to March 7, caused by the Government's planned offensive against the postal workers to block their just wage claim, prevented the delivery of the February and March issues of *Labour Monthly* to the majority of our readers.

So long as the heroic fight of the postal workers, maintained for seven weeks without strike pay, was in progress, we were confident that our readers at home and abroad who missed their copies would understand this incidental casualty of a major class conflict, and we had no wish to publicise the acute problem involved for a journal such as ours, dependent for its existence on monthly sales.

But now that the immediate battle is terminated, we have to place before our readers the plain facts of the very serious situation which has resulted for our journal. Here are the facts of the effect of the postal stoppage on our circulation as it stood on January 1, 1971:

Eleven hundred copies, or nearly one fifth of our circulation, go to individual postal subscribers, our firmest basis of support. None of these were able to receive their copies for February and March.

Fifteen hundred copies go to a wide range of overseas orders, usually in small consignments, in some fifty countries. None of these could be sent.

Five hundred copies still go to the commercial trade, despite all the efforts of some wholesalers to strangle this trade.

Two thousand four hundred copies go to organisations of the labour and progressive movements, to progressive bookshops, co-operative organisations, trade unions and labour parties. Delivery of these was only possible to the big centres, which were only able to some extent to distribute these copies further. Many small consignments, entirely depending on postal despatch, were held up.

The net effect is that close on two-thirds of our current net sales circulation of 5,500 was prevented during these two months from reaching the would-be purchasers.

The financial emergency this has meant for us is acute. We have prided ourselves on paying our way month by month, entirely on

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sales to readers, together with the welcome donations to the Fund. We have no subsidies or fairy godmother. The margin by which we keep solvent is narrow. For two months the normal income from sales, subscriptions and other orders ceased to come in. But all the normal expenditure on the monthly bills continued to come in for printing, paper, rent (which has more than doubled this year), heating, lighting and office upkeep and minimum administrative wages. During these seven weeks we have suffered a net loss which we estimate, after allowing for back payments that can now come in, at over £1,000. We are in no position to carry this loss.

Not only has the immediate financial loss to be made good but there is something more if our journal is to continue. January and February are the two main months for the renewal of orders for the year and postal subscriptions. All such renewals were prevented during these two critical months. Once lost, renewals are not easily taken out later. Where organisations allocate a budget for the year, that allocation will have been spent without the normal renewal for our journal having taken place, so that subsequent renewal after the normal time has passed will prove difficult.

For fifty years we have fought our way forward maintaining publication unbroken in face of boycott and every obstacle, political storms, slumps and wars. It would be ironic if, while we and our readers are preparing to celebrate a Golden Jubilee of fifty years, our further existence should be threatened by a cross-current of this Tory Government's postal offensive against the standards of the workers and the solidarity of trade unionism.

The loyalty and devotion of our readers have successfully maintained our journal through all the stresses of these fifty years. The same loyalty and devotion, we are sure, will rally again to meet and overcome this present emergency. But the need of response is urgent.

What needs to be done? We would ask of each of our readers three things:

First, to send us an Emergency Donation to wipe out the deficit.

Second, to hasten payment of all accounts due, or renewals of orders.

Third, to campaign themselves, not only to ensure renewal of interrupted orders, but to make up for lost circulation and ensure its expansion.

We have set out the full facts for the information of our readers. We have every confidence that the response of our readers will be able to overcome this emergency. The fight goes forward.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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Notes of the Month

AFTER THE SPECIAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

> **'What gives these unions and the strikes arising from them their real importance is this, that they are the first attempt of the workers to abolish competition. They imply the recognition of the fact that the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is based only upon the competition of the workers among themselves; i.e. upon their want of cohesion. And precisely because the unions direct themselves against the vital nerve of the present social order, however one-sidedly, in however narrow a way, are they so dangerous to this social order.'**
>
> ENGELS, *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, Ch. VIII, 'Labour Movements', pp. 218-219.

March 21, 1971

March 18, 1971, the centenary day of the Paris Commune, saw three landmarks in the stormy history of the British working class. Some three million workers struck in a one-day strike, with support of the biggest unions in the country, stilling the roar of engineering factories, shipyards, docks, metropolitan newspaper presses and a host of enterprises, to proclaim their united opposition to the Tory Government's Trade Union Bill, which seeks to wipe out all the previous legislation of trade union rights won by the struggle of the workers over two centuries, imposes servitude on the trade unions to the orders of the capitalist state, impounds their funds, and threatens every recalcitrant trade union leader, shop steward, individual trade unionist, socialist propagandist and working class press with financial penalties and prison. On the same day the Special TUC at Croydon proclaimed the united opposition of the entire trade union movement, of nine and a half million trade unionists, to this Slavery Bill, and revealed the relative alignment of forces at this stage on the tactics to be adopted in the fight, with unions representing five and one third millions advocating non-co-operation with the machinery of the Tory anti-union legislation after it has become law, and with unions representing close on four millions advocating, not only such non-co-operation, but the use of the full industrial strength of the organised working class to defeat the bill. On the same day the total number of unemployed—the grim expression of the Tory Government's policy and the counterpart of its anti-union offensive—was announced to have

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reached the record total of nearly 800,000, the highest since 1941 (that is, since the inferno of war broke the mass depression of the nineteen-thirties), and with the prospect of reaching a million or over by the end of the year. Such are the conditions of the battle now developing in Britain.

The Battle Goes Forward

If the Tory Government and enemies of trade unionism seek to draw comfort from the outcome of the voting at Croydon, because those described as 'moderates', advocating absolute non-co-operation with the Government's anti-union legislative machinery, won a narrow majority over those described as 'militants', advocating industrial action, they may be celebrating their triumph too soon. 'Relief from Croydon' was the hosanna of the *Daily Telegraph* editorial: 'So far as it goes, the outcome of the TUC vote at Croydon is satisfactory.' 'The majority, though a bare majority, is still responsible,' observed the *Times* with relief, but added a warning that among the opponents 'some are communists who do not wish to see our present society preserved' (that is, do not wish to see capitalism preserved), and 'there is obviously a danger in a communist minority leading a silent majority.' 'Scanlon's Last Stand' chortled the *Sun*. Certainly this unanimity of the press of the class enemy in acclaiming the General Council majority as 'responsible', and flinging diatribes of abuse at the elected leaders of millions of trade unionists who stood for active resistance to the Tory offensive, is an indication which carries its significance to every intelligent trade unionist who is accustomed to the antics of the kept press in relation to the workers' struggle. But it is a measure of the deepening of the struggle when the Tories can actually heave a sigh of relief that a narrow majority has been obtained for pledges—accepted by all—to refuse co-operation with the machinery which the Government plans to establish for the control of the trade unions. It is a sign of the deepening of the struggle when, in face of all the concentrated press, radio and television propaganda, abuse of elected left-wing leaders and loudly trumpeted scare-cries about a 'threat to parliamentary democracy', the delegates of four million trade unionists cast their votes for industrial action to defeat the Tory offensive on working class rights.

Croydon 1969 and Croydon 1971

Two years ago the vote of the Special TUC at Croydon compelled the Labour Government to abandon its proposals for trade union legislation with penal sanctions. Today the same battle has reached

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a more advanced stage. The experience of every stand by the TUC has shown again and again how what may begin as a minority view, spearheaded by the militant vanguard, can grow at successive annual meetings to win the support of increasing millions, and eventually, as in the case of the fight against the wage freeze imposed by the Attlee Labour Government, the fight spearheaded by the electricians then in the militant vanguard, become the majority view and the official policy of the Congress. But over the present issue, when the Tory Government is determined to press through its legislation this summer, there is no time to wait for successive annual meetings. The need for effective action is now; and conditions may arise to make it necessary to recall the Special TUC.

Class Issues and Politics

All class battles are in the end political battles. That is why the scare-cry is so indefensible which condemns any use of industrial strength to defeat the anti-union offensive as impermissible and out of order because it would mean invading the sacred field of politics. Every struggle of the workers from the beginning, from the days of the struggle against the Combination Laws or of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, which has step by step extorted working class rights from an unwilling ruling class, has been in fact a political struggle, not because it may have found one or two philanthropic sympathisers to express some words of approval of its aims in parliament, but because it was a struggle of the workers in action for a political aim. All the more today, with the increasingly close integration of advanced monopoly capitalism and the machinery of the state, it is impossible to erect artificial barriers between the class struggle and the political struggle, or to treat the political struggle as the preserve of a handful of parliamentarians who are regularly chopped off in the midst of their arguments by the guillotine. The great issues of class relations are not settled by sweet reason and argument. They are settled by class strength. The Tories may seek to delude the unwary by waving before them a thousand warning signboards and repeating all the parrot cries about 'the rights of parliament' and their 'mandate' and the 'principles of democracy', in order to hide from the masses their real strength and paralyse them from using it. But the Tories themselves have shown how much they care for these sacred principles when their own interests are involved, as in the Carsonite revolt and organisation of military mutiny by the highest Tory leaders, which laid the foundation for the present bitter situation in Northern Ireland.

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Remember the Council of Action

Labour also in time of stress has not hesitated to use industrial action for a political aim. This was shown in the Council of Action in 1920, which by the open threat of strike action stopped the Lloyd George Government from going ahead with its war plans against the Soviet Union. On August 9, 1920, a joint meeting of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, the Labour Party Executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party adopted 'with a surprising unanimity' (in the words of the official Labour Party Conference Report) the resolution establishing the Council of Action and warning the Government that:

> the whole industrial power of the organised workers will be used to defeat this war; that the Executive Committees of affiliated organisations throughout the country be summoned to hold themselves ready to proceed immediately to London for a National Conference; that they be advised to instruct their members to 'down tools' on instructions from that National Conference; and that a Council of Action be immediately constituted to take such steps as may be necessary to carry the above decisions into effect.

On August 13, 1920, the Special Conference of the TUC and the Labour Party in London, demonstrated according to the official Labour Party Conference Report, 'one of the most significant examples of Labour unanimity, determination and enthusiasm in the history of the movement', as it adopted without dissent the resolution which declared

> *the Conference authorises the Council of Action to call for any and every* form of withdrawal of labour which circumstances may require to give effect to the foregoing policy.

There was no hesitation then in using the full strength of the threat of industrial action to fulfil a political aim. And it was successful. The Lloyd George Government had to give way. That is an omen and a signpost for our situation today. The need for such united action is no less absolute today, when the most elementary rights of working class organisation are at stake.

How They Hate the Unions

Trade unions as independent organs of the working class struggle have always been and are hated by the ruling class, however much nowadays its spokesmen may seek to conceal their hatred beneath the veneer of patronising tolerance and esteem, and even pamper and load with honours some of the leaders, if tamed. The old Combination Act of 1825 declared trade unions to be

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injurious to trade and commerce, dangerous to the tranquillity of the country, and especially prejudicial to the interests of all concerned in them.

The Webbs in 1897 noted:

> Down to within the last thirty years it would have been taken for granted by every educated man that Trade Unionism as a means of bettering the condition of the workman was 'against Political Economy' . . . For the first three quarters of the century we find, beyond the accustomed denunciation of outrages and strikes, practically nothing but a general and undiscriminating hostility to Trade Unionism in the abstract, couched in the language of theoretical economics (Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, 1897, p. 603).

Today also, each time that illusions of the end of the old hostility and the dawn of class co-operation are spread, the real hatred and conflict break through again. After Whitleyism at the end of the first world war had sought to spread the deceitful sirens' song of class co-operation, the thunder of the general strike in 1926 revealed the full class conflict higher than ever. After the betrayal of the general strike the leaders of that betrayal sought to integrate the unions into the machinery of the capitalist state. Ernest Bevin in his presidential address at the Norwich TUC in 1937 declared that the TUC had 'now virtually become an integral part of the state'. Once again all these illusions of placid class co-operation have received the staggering blow of the Tory offensive of the Trade Union Bill, the heaviest offensive in the whole history of trade unionism.

Venom of the 'Economist'

Listen to the *Economist*'s venom today to see how living is this hatred of the unions:

> No court of justice could easily categorise these one-day strikes as industrial disputes. They are illegal political acts of force and constraint, designed to intimidate a democratically elected parliament from passing legislation which a majority of MPs (and of the country) believe to be long overdue. It follows that the financial damage caused by these stoppages—and it must be over £10 million a time—should be recoverable through court suits from the men and organisations who have initiated these illegal actions. By these means the two largest trade unions in the country could now probably be rendered as insolvent as the Vehicle and General Insurance Company. New unions would and should then be formed to represent the members who had been betrayed, but persons listed as undischarged bankrupts would not be able to handle members' subscriptions and trust funds. This, however, is another of the facts that it is considered unsporting and impolitic to mention in Britain today (*Economist*, March 6, 1971).

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With what pained reluctance the golden dream of bankrupting the major trade unions is toyed with only to be regretfully put aside as impracticable at the present stage. But recent press reports have indicated that the Government is considering the plan to set the Monopolies Commission to work to reorganise the trade unions.

The Big Lie about the 'Mandate'

A grand barrage of lies is fired to intimidate opposition and cover up the brutal realities of the Tory anti-union offensive. The Industrial Relations Bill is stated to represent the will of the majority of the electorate in fulfilment of the mandate given by that majority in June of last year. There was never a more insolent deception. The so-called majority was a minority (46.3 per cent) of the votes. Out of the total electorate of 39,364,000 in June 1970, the Conservative vote totalled 13,091,000, or *less than one-third* of the electorate. But this 'mandate' of one-third of the electorate was given Mr Heath and the Tories, as every historian of the election has testified, on the basis of Mr Heath's pledge in his notorious vote-catching speech on the very eve of the election poll, that he 'would at a stroke reduce prices, increase production and reduce unemployment.' During the nine months since Mr Heath has taken office, prices have risen faster than ever, mainly through his Government's policies for increasing prices; production has stagnated with the lowest growth rate of any capitalist country; and unemployment has reached the highest record since the war. And this perjured Government of the broken mandate has the insolence to talk of 'fulfilling its mandate' in order to bully the trade unions into acquiescence in its offensive. This electoral demagogic swindle is a familiar old device of Toryism, from the Zinoviev forgery to win the election of 1924, or the 'Save the gold standard' cry of 1931, or the pledge of 'resolute adherence to collective security' in 1935. Government Ministers would be wiser to keep their mouths shut about their 'mandate'.

Tactical Issues and Unity

The Government prides itself on having 'divided' the unions because of the five-four vote on the two contentious issues at the Special TUC (the other five propositions of the General Council for refusal to co-operate in the machinery of union control planned by the Government legislation were unanimously adopted). This division on tactics is important; but the Special Congress showed there was no division in the complete unanimity in opposition to

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the Trade Union Bill (even the most right-wing speaker, who was nearly howled down so that the Chairman had to intervene to save the speaker from the indignation of the assembled delegates, made his fantastic proposal for a 'guaranteed strike-free year' as a suggested price for the withdrawal of the bill). The tactical division turned on the method of fighting the Tory anti-union offensive. On the one hand, there were those who advocated a half-way or compromise policy, to combine opposition to the anti-union offensive with limitation of the forms of the fight, so as to keep within the limits of the law and the norms of parliamentary democracy, and therefore to confine the fight to a propaganda campaign until the bill becomes law, and after the bill becomes law to pursue a policy of non-co-operation with the machinery established under it. On the other hand, the alternative viewpoint, supported by powerful key militant sections of the working class, advocated the use of the full strength of the organised working class, including industrial action, in order to defeat the bill and compel the Government to abandon its anti-union offensive.

Beware the Slippery Slope to Surrender

The weakness in the position of the advocates of the compromise formula is that they have failed to face the consequences of their own policy. At the same time as they emphasise the importance of keeping within the law, and assert that the bill will inevitably become the law, they make pledges of non-co-operation in the machinery established by the Act once it is brought into operation. But the fulfilment of these pledges of non-co-operation would inevitably mean, if carried out, defiance of the law (e.g. the fourth recommendation, to continue to deal with inter-union disputes in accordance with the Bridlington procedure established by the TUC, in place of accepting the new statutory authority established to deal with such questions); and such defiance could involve the unions concerned with liability to the financial penalties laid down as 'damages' of £100,000 to be paid by unions with over 100,000 members (80 per cent of trade union membership) for every offence against the enforced industrial code. If this procedure to bankrupt the unions is resisted, the fight will be on, despite all the desire to keep within the law, but at a later stage, under more unfavourable conditions than before the bill is law, when there is still the opportunity for the trade unions to use their industrial strength to compel the Government to withdraw the bill. Hence the path of would-be compromise either leads to the inevitable fight later but under more

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unfavourable conditions, or, by its own logic, leads to extending and eventually unlimited surrender. For this reason the path of compromise plays into the hands of the Tory Government; and their welcome to the majority vote at the Special TUC has shown that this is in fact their opinion. When the 'socialist' *New Statesman* denounced the democratically elected leaders of foremost unions as 'mindless militants', the Tory Minister Carr, in charge of the anti-union offensive, immediately seized the opportunity to take over this phrase and make it his own. When Victor Feather at the TUC in September coined the phrase that 'one man's strike can be another man's lay-off', Premier Heath similarly adopted the formula to declare on March 18 that 'one man's strike call becomes another's redundancy notice'. Thus the would-be 'moderate' path of the compromise formula in practice divides the workers and feeds Toryism.

Against Defeatism—United Action Can Win

The fatal flaw in the position accepted by the General Council majority and the narrow majority at the Special TUC is the assumption that it is inevitable that the Tory Trade Union Bill will become law, and that nothing the trade unions can do can change this. This key conception was set out in Victor Feather's opening statement at the Special TUC when he said that it is 'practically certain that the bill will reach the statute book some time this summer unless a general election takes place before then, and I do not think that that is a likelihood.' This defeatist attitude is a menace, not because the prediction may prove in the outcome correct or incorrect, but precisely because, if accepted, it can be self-fulfilling. If you go into a fight convinced that the enemy is bound to win anyway, you are beaten before you begin the fight. The *present fight* is to defeat the Trade Union Bill before it becomes law, and to compel the Government to withdraw it. That fight needs the united strength of the entire organised working class. It is not true that such united action of the organised working class is incapable of achieving its aim. The experience of the Council of Action in 1920, described in detail above, showed that the united stand of the entire organised working class, of the TUC, Labour Party and Parliamentary Labour Party, with the open threat to 'down tools' for the fulfilment of its political aim was able to compel the Lloyd George Government with its reactionary coupon-elected parliamentary majority to give way. There were six and a half millions in the TUC in 1920. There are nine and a half millions today. The urgent need is that this

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gigantic united strength should be used to maintain the elementary rights of working class organisation against the most serious offensive in trade union history. In preparation for this it is essential to mobilise awareness and readiness for action at every level of the movement, in every organisation, in every workshop, factory, enterprise and office to participate in the advance of the movement, and to respond, after the lobby on March 24, for the rally on April 24, for the eve of May Day on April 30, and on May Day, and for each further advancing stage of the fight. **R.P.D.**

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

The new forward movement now taking place amongst large sections of workers is the biggest since the General Strike. In a period of acute economic crisis involving unparalleled unemployment, and with the whole force of the official Labour machine directed against the working class, valiantly large sections of workers are now openly beating back the attacks of the capitalists.

This rising tide of struggle in the present period is most heartening and indicates the amazing possibilities that lie in front of the revolutionary workers once they grasp the significance of what is now taking place. . .

Amongst the railwaymen there is a growing resistance to the findings of the National Wages Board. The 'work-to-rule' movement carried through in London and Liverpool, the resolutions of the South Essex District Council of the NUR and of the London District Council of the NUR show the tremendous fighting spirit that exists amongst railway workers.

(From 'On The Eve of The Charter Convention', by Harry Pollitt, *Labour Monthly*, April 1931.)

CORRESPONDENCE:

Capitalist Society and Modern Sociology

WITH RESPECT to Harold Wolpe, whose review of my book appeared in a recent issue (*LM*, January 1971), I am afraid he rather misunderstood my purpose in writing it.

He is, of course, quite right in pointing out the absence of much theory in the book; but its purpose was much more limited. Masses of people who call themselves socialists, mostly in the Labour Party and/or trade unions, still have illusions about the inroads made into British capitalism and its social structure by the Attlee and Wilson Governments. It was my purpose to strip off this veil of illusion and show how, despite all changes, the structure remains fundamentally the same. At the same time I attacked the sort of sociological claptrap put over in reactionary or confused books and lectures.

To have attempted a much more penetrating theoretical analysis would have (a) made it too long for publication at a price which would have been higher even than the present high price, and (b) changed and narrowed the type of audience it was originally aimed at, namely, the thinking working person in the movement who wants to *know*. It might have then been read by a smaller, more specialist audience. This was not my aim, which is to write books for as wide a public as possible. H. FRANKEL, London, S.W.

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ENGINEERS' STRIKE

Ernie Roberts
Assistant General Secretary
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers

THIS year, 1971, is a most historic year for the trade unions of Britain, due to the many actions that they have taken and are taking against the Tory Government's efforts to re-introduce anti-trade union legislation. It is exactly 100 years since the trade unions compelled the government of the day to introduce legislation giving unions legal recognition in 1871. This is the most critical year since 1926, but today the movement is much more powerful and experienced than it was during the 1926 general strike.

Millions of workers were in action on December 8, January 12, February 15, March 1 and March 18. They have voted with their feet against the Government's efforts to destroy the trade unions. The decision of the AUEW Conference on February 4—by an overwhelming vote of 63 to 5—for a series of one-day strikes, and the decisions of other unions, such as SOGAT and the Boilermakers, to take strike action, in each case have been loyally carried out by the members. These decisions and the pressure of trade union representatives, e.g. Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones, on the TUC General Council have caused the General Council to stiffen its attitude to the Industrial Relations Bill and the Tory Government.

The decision of the Executive Council of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) to press for industrial action through the TUC, and the encouragement to its members to support the strike on March 18, raised the fight to a new level, but the national leaderships of such trade unions as the General and Municipal Workers' Union (NUGMW), Electrical Electronic Telecommunication Union/Plumbing Trades Union, National Union of Mineworkers, and certain other unions had a retarding effect on their members by not supporting the industrial action. Nevertheless, on March 1 the call by the AUEW for a one-day stoppage resulted in over two million workers striking for the day. The working class, trade union instincts prevailed and millions of trade unionists, including members of the TGWU, NUGMW and the EETU/PTU, stopped work. They struck in unity as workers against their common enemy—the Industrial Relations Bill.

The demonstration at which I spoke in Liverpool on March 1 was representative of all engineering trade unionists; 15,000 marched

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through the centre of Liverpool, including 10,000 Merseyside dockers who stopped work too, showing their traditional working class militancy.

Throughout the length and breadth of Britain meetings, marches and rallies of workers were held on March 1. The local and national press, TV and radio in anti-trade union, loud-mouthed alliance tried their damnedest to throw doubt and disruption on the growing unity of the workers in action, but they did not succeed. They are becoming discredited as real news agencies and are being treated as organs of the establishment, supporters of the Government and employers. Howls of rage and fear are expressed by the reactionary forces in the country against workers, who are learning to use their united strength in order to attain their aims and to defend their trade union rights.

In all the demonstrations on March 1, the 200,000 postal workers who had been on strike for several weeks took part, and collections were made and given to them by their fellow trade unionists to assist them in their fight. (If only this class feeling had been given a lead by trade union leaders, by arranging a levy of one hour's pay each week by the nine-and-a-half million trade unionists, the postal workers would not have been starved back to work.)

The refusal of the Tory national press to print an AUEW advertisement, calling on its members to strike on March 1, is an example of how free the press is. Despite this, millions of engineering trade unionists flexed their mighty muscles. March 1 is a red letter day in our history; we are growing in stature and understanding.

Many meetings and demonstrations were held in preparation for the second one-day strike on March 18. Provocative acts and attempts to break up the meetings were made in some instances. At one of the meetings I addressed in Swansea, at the AUEW Meeting Hall, the police arrived, saying that they were to search the hall as they had received a telephone call that a bomb had been planted there. Similarly at Newark Town Hall, on March 11, the police attempted to stop our meeting so that they could make a search for a bomb. In each of these cases we refused their request, and continued with our meeting. On March 17, the police visited the headquarters of the AUEW, because a telephone call had been received alleging that a bomb had been planted there.

There were threats of closures, lockouts and dismissals by employers, attempted intimidation of strikers through their wives, and moans by the employers about their financial losses and their estimated loss of £70 million worth of production due to the one-day

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strike—but they conveniently overlooked the thousands of millions of pounds lost in production due to nearly 800,000 unemployed workers.

In spite of the Government's and employers' opposition to the preparation for the March 18 strike, the organisation was excellent. Over three million took strike action. This coincided with the Special TUC in Croydon, where strikers lobbied the trade union leaders and delegates and insisted on the whole of the trade union movement taking industrial action to 'Kill the Bill'. They put pressure on the right-wing trade union leaders, as they knew this was to be a testing time for the leadership of the TUC to either stand and fight or to go down pleading and hoping for a Labour Government. The determined attitude of the rank-and-file of the unions gave a lead, encouragement and support to trade union leaders. It is the ordinary members who are making real sacrifices to protect their trade union organisations.

In Preston, where I spoke to the demonstration of strikers on March 18, there were 9,000 Leyland workers on strike, as were English Electric-AEI, from Preston Dock, and many thousands of other workers. Ford workers who have been on strike for several weeks were present in the meeting and an excellent collection was taken for them. It was understood by these trade unionists that 'an injury to one is an injury to all' and that victory for Ford workers would be a victory for all trade unionists.

The impetus and pressure of these one-day strikes made themselves felt in the debates on the Industrial Relations Bill at the Special Congress. There is no doubt that if more trade union leaders had issued a call for industrial action prior to the Congress there would have been an overwhelming majority for industrial action at the Congress, instead of the narrow defeat for such action.

These strikes have unleashed considerable trade union consciousness among the workers which in the end will bring about the defeat of the anti-trade union legislation, and the Tory Government.

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BRITAIN, SOUTH AFRICA AND THE COMMONWEALTH

Brian Bunting

'To arm South Africa is to arm racialism. It is to side with racialism—to have it as an ally.'
PRESIDENT JULIUS NYERERE, November 1970.

PRIME Minister Heath and Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home are trying to eat their cake and have it—hand on heart, they express their detestation of apartheid; in the same breath they insist they are obliged to carry out their legal obligations under the Simonstown Agreement. 'Britain's vital interests are at stake,' they maintain.

When the Simonstown Agreement was first signed in 1955 (in fact it is not even an agreement, merely an exchange of letters), Britain had a whole clutch of colonies in Africa for which she was responsible. Today these colonies are independent, and it is precisely these countries (with the exception of Malawi) which are most strongly opposing the sale of arms to South Africa. Why? President Nyerere said:

> There is a conflict going on in Africa now. It is not a conflict between communism and freedom, or communism and democracy. It is a conflict between the apartheid policies of South Africa and the colonialism of Portugal on the one hand, and the African peoples of southern Africa with the support of the independent African states on the other hand. It's a conflict about racialism and colonialism.

By deciding to sell seven Westland Wasp helicopters to South Africa, the Tory Government has indicated quite clearly where it stands. This is not a legal but a political commitment, and has been interpreted as such by the whole world.

The announcement was greeted in the South African parliament with loud cheering from both sides of the house. The correspondent of the London *Economist* reported that in the lobbies afterwards government supporters expressed their delight and their

> quite firm belief that the Wasps marked not only the beginning of the end of the arms boycott but also a breakthrough in South Africa's long campaign to win acceptance in the western world . . . other arms sales will surely have to follow. And, what is most important, it also establishes South Africa's acceptability as an ally: the way has been opened for South Africa to remain an accepted partner in western defence arrangements.

The pro-Government Afrikaans paper in Cape Town, *Die Burger* greeted the news with banner headlines, a front-page portrait of

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Edward Heath, and the editorial opinion 'that this step will be seen as, and indeed is intended to be, the start of fuller military co-operation between Britain and South Africa.'

This still leaves open the question—military co-operation against whom? The only open challenge to British vital interests in the area has come from the Smith Government, and so far nobody has suggested the possibility of South Africa's joining with Britain to put down the rebellion and re-establish the authority of the Crown in the area. On the contrary, the Salisbury correspondent of the Johannesburg *Star* reported on March 2, 1971: 'There is no doubt that Mr Heath's firm stand over arms sales to South Africa has heartened Rhodesians.' The Rhodesian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence, Mr Howman, welcomed Britain's stand and appealed to Rhodesians 'during this dangerous period not to embarrass her friends and associates.' Rhodesia's Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal A. O. G. Wilson, called on the major western powers to get their perspectives right and support the countries in southern Africa who are prepared to fight 'Communist infiltration'. Heath's deal with Vorster may be followed sooner than most people think by a deal with Smith as well. It is known that talks are secretly in progress. Of their direction there can be little doubt; only the details and the timing remain to be settled.

Britain's vital interests in South Africa are investments totalling £2,000 million, investments from which she draws a rate of interest almost double that she gets from the rest of the world. These investments are threatened, not by a handful of Soviet ships in the Indian Ocean, but by the liberation struggle of the African peoples throughout southern Africa. Everybody knows of the 'unholy alliance' between South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal to maintain white supremacy in southern Africa. This alliance has now openly been joined by the British Government.

The South Africans themselves make no bones about the function of their army. 'The first task of the Defence Force,' said the Minister of Defence in 1963, 'is to help the police maintain law and order'—as they did, helicopters and all, during the state of emergency which followed the Sharpeville shooting in 1960. In March 1970, the Commandant-General of the South African Defence Force, General R. C. Hiemstra (who resigned from the South African forces in 1941 because he refused to take the oath to fight the Nazis outside South Africa's borders) said: 'We are experiencing one of the great periods of revolution in the history of mankind.' This required, he said, the maintenance of maximum unity amongst

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white South Africans, and the establishment of relations with 'Non-White nations' which 'would not endanger the maintenance of our White heritage in any way.' Significantly, he added: 'The will of the people to maintain their White heritage and sovereignty should come to fruition in a powerful defence force.'

The South African Minister of Community Development, Mr Blaar Coetzee, in a speech in Bloemfontein in November 1970, said 'law and order' in South Africa would be maintained at all costs under the Nationalist Government, and people would be detained for 90, 180 or even 1,000 days if necessary. Mr Coetzee said South Africa did not need weapons for aggression or to defend itself against its neighbours but 'to make the United Nations realise that it would have a tough nut to crack when it started to consider armed intervention in this country.'

To all these racialist objectives Heath is now making his contribution. True, helicopters costing only £1 million to start with, but with the prospect of a lot more in the offing. South Africa budgeted £150 million for its Defence Force in 1970-71 and spent over £30 million on armaments alone during the 1969-70 financial year. Heath and the British arms manufacturers want their share of the loot. Hawker Siddeley have shown a fine sense of anticipation. In September 1970, they clinched a £1 million order from South Africa for three HS 748 'feeder airliners'—a short-haul turbo-prop aircraft. Although used mainly as a passenger plane, it has a military potential, and 31 transport versions, known as the Andover, are in service with the RAF.

Two months later, in November 1970, it was announced that the Director of Operations of the South African Air Force, Brigadier Servaas van Breda Theron, had retired at the early age of 51 to become managing director of the South African operations of Hawker Siddeley. He replaced Air Vice-Marshal Jacklin, the former head of the Rhodesian Air Force, who died in 1969. Asked if he had been employed as a sort of super-salesman to sell aircraft to the South African Air Force, Brigadier Theron said: 'I would rather not talk about that.' But the Johannesburg *Star* commented:

> The appointment of Brigadier Theron by Hawker Siddeley will considerably strengthen the firm's position if the ban is lifted as it is obviously keen to get back into this military market which is worth many millions of rands.

Hawker Siddeley have in the past supplied South Africa with Buccaneers, and were advertising their new Nimrod reconnaissance aircraft in Afrikaans newspapers and the Defence Force magazine even before the last British general election.

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In his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury last November, Heath said:

> It would totally negate the stand I and my colleagues took over racial issues in the recent general election if we were to endorse or support a political system based on racial discrimination. . . . We reject and condemn the system of apartheid.

How does that statement look now, after the arms deal and the new Immigration Bill? And if Heath is mealy-mouthed or inhibited, perhaps Mr George Pole, leader of a group of Monday Club members who toured South Africa and Rhodesia last January, expressed more of what goes on in Tory minds when he said that 'such humbug as the United Nations' call for a world ban on arms to South Africa had no place in Conservative philosophy.' Mr Pole praised the policy of 'separate development' for sparing South Africa the racial disturbances that had marred countries from Tanzania to the United States. As for the Commonwealth, Mr Pole said:

> In my view the Commonwealth has had its day. . . . Britain's freedom of action is being affected by the present structure of the Commonwealth. We no longer enjoy the fruits of Empire and cannot be expected to carry the burdens any longer.

By his cavalier treatment of the delegates to the Singapore Commonwealth conference, and by announcing the decision to sell the Wasps before the study group set up at Singapore had even had a chance to meet, Heath has placed his own interpretation on the value of the Commonwealth. Is it any different from that of Mr Pole? The diplomatic correspondent of the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* cabled from Singapore that Commonwealth delegates flew out after the conference 'stunned' by reports of Heath's anti-African behaviour and attitudes in off-the-record conversations with selected newsmen.

> Asked why he thought Africans had displayed such emotion over the arms issue, Mr. Heath's reply, according to several versions, was that it was because they were Africans . . . . According to some who heard him, his views seemed to be so rigid and his attitude so tough that several were highly dismayed . . . .
>
> Another impression was that about the only enjoyable occasion he attended was a dinner with the Premiers of Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, who are his partners in the emerging five-power defence pact in South-East Asia.

From all this it is clear that the Heath administration is reverting to the worst pattern of Tory rule—a combination of anti-working class and anti-colour legislation at home, and the vicious foreign policies of the most dangerous periods of the cold war. If Heath today finds he has more in common with Vorster than with Kaunda,

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it is because he is faithfully reflecting the interests of the British ruling class, for whom profits always have and always will come before principles.

Nor is the British Government alone in this attitude. The western imperialist states are all involved in the South African profit machinery, and all regard South Africa, like Israel, as an indispensable ally in their drive to retain the countries of Africa and the Middle East within their orbit.

The British Government's resumption of arms sales has demonstrated afresh that the fight against apartheid cannot be separated from the world-wide struggle of all peoples against imperialism and neo-colonialism. Will the British labour movement draw the necessary conclusions?

FORDS—THE FACTS

Moss Evans
National Secretary
Automotive Group
Transport and General Workers' Union

ON November 27, 1970, an application was made to the Ford Motor Company for parity of hourly rates with the rest of the motor manufacturing industry, with particular emphasis on that being paid to workers at Chrysler (United Kingdom) Ltd. and British Leyland Motor Corporation. This followed the understanding reached between Moss Evans, Chairman of the Ford Trade Union Side Joint National Negotiating Committee and the Personnel Director, Mr. R. Ramsey, that should the Trade Union Side put the item of parity on the agenda then the Company would in fact listen to what the unions have to say and reply at an appropriate time. On November 27, before the Company had an opportunity of examining in depth the trade unions' claim, which had taken them some months to prepare at a cost of several thousand pounds, assisted by economists, the Company rejected the unions' concept of 'parity' and indicated their intentions to make a wage offer.

On January 29, the Company made an offer of £2 across the board. They also made an offer of an additional £1.20 for workers with four years service or more, on the understanding that there would be no general economic demands for twelve months, and that the job rate grievance procedure be suspended for a twelve-month period. Which meant, in effect, a complete stand-still on

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adjustments of any character relative to wages or hourly rates for a period of twelve months. This the unions rejected—it was rejected by the total labour force on February 1, and fifty thousand workers withdrew their labour. By February 5, all the unions agreed to support their membership financially. There have been a further three meetings with the Company in order to see if settlement could be arrived at, without success, the final position being that the Company have offered to pay workers a basic adjustment of £3.20, which could be improved upon with working shifts or when working overtime.

It seems extremely unlikely that the strike, in its seventh week at the time of writing, is going to end for some time. Meetings of members have been held in all locations throughout Britain, and at these meetings the workers have reaffirmed their stand to achieve hourly rates which at least compare favourably with BLMC and Chrysler UK, which in effect means that if the Company were to put matters right in terms of hourly rate they would have to concede increases of at least 30p and 35p per hour. Even today, in the knowledge that Vauxhalls have conceded increases marginally better than Fords without any disputes whatsoever and have indicated their willingness to continue negotiations, this will, no doubt, embitter further the feelings of Fords workers, particularly when in fact Fords have been making exceptionally good profits over the last five or six years, as opposed to Vauxhalls who suffered more than a nine million-pound loss. One can do no more than to quote a summary of our case as contained in the submissions made on November 27 when we said to the Company:

'No matter how well you argue, you will not be able to deny that your employees are paid around 6s. to 8s. an hour less than those doing the same jobs at BLMC and Chrysler in this country. Nor can you show that this underpayment does anything but contribute to the profits of the Company. You cannot disagree that this underpayment by Ford is damaging the rest of the motor industry. You cannot deny that Ford workers, when they have parity, will be just as secure (or insecure) as those employed by BLMC and Chrysler. You have already agreed that Ford employees' productivity is higher than the rest of the motor industry.

'You know perfectly well that the labour costs, not only at Ford Germany, but also at Volkswagen—and, of course, Volvo—are higher than what we are asking, and that this increase is in no way incompatible with a higher level of exports and the maintenance of Ford's share in the domestic market. We have seen in the past

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year at Vauxhall that low wage rates do not protect a company from losing money if they avoid meeting the realistic aspirations of their employees.

'And, whilst this is not your concern, you will understand our own desire as trade unionists to cease being the price-cutters on the British and European labour markets.'

HOW DEEP IS BRITAIN'S CRISIS?

John Durkin

'FRIDAY morning's gain of 21.7 points in the *Financial Times* index was a record' (*Observer*, June 21, 1970, commenting on the Stock Exchange boom, the day after the Tory general election victory). 'After the brutal hammering they have taken in the last few days, shares struggled off their knees and made a fight of it on the Stock Exchange today' (*Evening News*, March 3, 1971). Yes, the boom didn't last very long. The *Financial Times* index is now at its lowest level for four years. Every day we are informed of one disaster or another hitting Britain's capitalist economy.

Economists usually categorise Britain's economy as being monopoly capitalist, where a few massive firms with international links dominate the economy. The supporters of capitalism in the main political parties tell us that it is no longer possible for capitalism to get into a mess, as it did in the 1929 Wall Street crash. They say these big monopolies are so big that they can outride any crisis. Well, I am afraid we have to disillusion these supporters of capitalism. The test of any theory is whether it works in the real world. So let us examine how Britain's big monopolies are faring in the latest economic crisis.

Rolls-Royce, pride of British quality engineering, employing 88,000 skilled workers, went bust. Vehicle and General, the second biggest motor insurance company, went bust. Esso, although increasing its turnover in 1970 by £49 million to £611 million, still lost over £7 million. Vauxhall's lost over £9 million in 1970 after losing over £2 million in 1969. Imperial Chemical Industries' profits in 1970 were £134 million compared with £169 million in 1969: a drop of £33 million in profit. British Leyland Motor Corporation's profits in 1970 were under £4 million, compared with over £50 million in 1969: an astronomical drop.

Of course, some economists may say the companies illustrated

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here are unfairly chosen. Well, according to the *Daily Mail* (February 24, 1971), 'Nearly 5,000 firms went bankrupt last year compared with 2,800 ten years ago.' Incidentally, its stable-mate, the *Daily Sketch*, is closing down.

We, the workers are usually told by big business employers and their political supporters: 'You are the hands, we are the brains: so therefore leave the decision-making to us.' Well, how are the decision-makers faring? The only answer the Tories and the employers have to their crisis is, first, drastically cut the workers' standard of living and, second, create mass unemployment as a threat to the employed workers who fight to maintain and improve their standard of living. The cost of living is now soaring at eight per cent per year even by official figures. The Director of the National Grocers' Federation says food prices could rise by ten per cent this year. Unemployment now affects over 761,000 people, and talk is of over a million unemployed by Christmas. The arms bill is boosted to waste over £2,500 million this coming year. Production virtually stagnates at a two per cent growth aim this year.

Now the big monopolies show their confidence and patriotism for Britain by simply cutting down their investments in their capitalist economy. 'The long slow sapping of our strength by under-investment' is what Sir Fred Catherwood, Director-General of Neddy, calls it. British Petroleum, Shell and Alcoa have curtailed or cut-back major investment programmes. (What price capitalist confidence?) Imperial Chemical Industries are cutting their investment in Britain by 25 per cent, but doubling their investment abroad. (What price capitalist patriotism?) Fords announce that their new £30 million engine plant will go abroad. (Will the Tories send a gunboat to Detroit because Fords are undermining Britain's economy!) BOAC say that 'Concorde' will prove uneconomical to use, after hundreds of millions of pounds have been spent developing it. Also the capitalist state-run British Steel Corporation appears to have had a bad year in 1970: the steel industry is the barometer showing the general state of industry.

Yes, under monopoly capitalism its supporters expect small firms to get into difficulties, get taken over or go bust; but obviously John Davies, Tory Minister for Trade and Industry, should have kept his big mouth shut last autumn when referring to 'lame ducks', because we are now seeing some lame elephants.

How deep is the present crisis? Some answers have been provided but it is a question which urgently needs further analysing by serious economists.

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Premier G. Papadopoulos, General O. Angelis, Chief of the Greek armed forces, and General Goodpaster, Chief of the Nato alliance, following the Nato 'Deep Express' exercise.

Admiral Henderson seen during his visit to the Regent, General G. Zoitakis.

The junta's Athens bulletin, *Greek News*, publishing these photographs in its issue of November 15, 1970, reported: 'The Chairman of the Military Committee of Nato, British Admiral Henderson, visited Athens in November 1970 and had a long talk in a friendly atmosphere on inter-allied questions related to the contribution of Greece to the Western Alliance. Admiral Henderson also saw the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek armed forces, General O. Angelis.'

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NATO AND THE GREEK JUNTA

Betty Ambatielos

THERE is a new drive to build up Greece as a key springboard and nuclear base for the aggressive aims of US imperialism in the Middle East. Developments are taking place with great speed. In September 1970, the resumption was announced of full military aid by the United States to the Greek fascist junta, and 56 million dollars' worth of tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery and other heavy arms are being delivered during the current year and the first six months of 1972. In return, the junta is reported to have agreed to the establishment of a Nato Atomic Headquarters, more bases and new facilities for naval, air and telecommunications. More harbours are being constructed. ('I think the fact that our ships can put into Greek ports is extremely important. At the present time, we have no other area in the Eastern Mediterranean where our Sixth Fleet ships freely could put into port,' R. Davies, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs told a US Congress Committee in July 1970.) Senator Fulbright, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has referred to the 'grave political implications' arising from the US maintaining nuclear weapons in Greece. When US Defence Secretary, Melvin Laird, toured bases in Greece last October, he had talks with junta chiefs which, it was reported, centred on the new Nato headquarters and nuclear submarine bases for the Peloponese.

The Laird visit was followed immediately by perhaps the biggest Nato exercise of 1970, called *Deep Express*. 100,000 men and air, naval and land forces from eight Nato countries participated, and all the weapons of modern warfare blasted away over Thrace and the Aegean Sea. Nato Supreme Commander, General A. Goodpaster, observed the exercise with US Navy Admiral Horacio Rivero, the Commander-in-Chief of Southern Europe Nato forces.

Deep Express was a political as well as military exercise. Not long before, European members of Nato had assembled at Strasbourg and driven the Greek dictatorship out of the Council of Europe. The strains on the Alliance became greater. *Deep Express* brought Europe into active collaboration—with the dictatorship they had condemned—so that they could demonstrate their ability to co-operate and their battle readiness for any future US action 'in defence of freedom' or 'against the threat of communism' in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East or Balkan area.

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Only a few days after *Deep Express*, a major operation began against the opponents of the dictatorship. From November 8, when Stratis Tsambis, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece and other patriots were arrested, until the end of December, the biggest wave of arrests of 1970 was carried out. Patriots seized included former members of parliament, lawyers, women, students and other young people. Christos Sartzetakis, the investigating magistrate in the Lambrakis assassination of 1963, was held by the infamous ESA (Military Police). The political spectrum covered by these arrests of people from various walks of life and politics reflects the continuing, resolute and universal opposition to the regime.

They were also a brutal reminder of the fascist reality hiding behind junta demagogy and myths. There was the original myth that the junta seized power to save Greece from a communist threat; then that the junta had a programme for a gradual return to democracy with, meantime, the liberalisation of its monstrous regime and, finally, the lifting of martial law and the full implementation of its fascist constitution. Promises were given galore—political prisoners would be freed, concentration camps and military trials ended, personal, trade union and press freedoms guaranteed.

But this has not happened. Instead, with 1971 came Papadopoulos's brazen statement that this year would see no change in the constitutional *status quo*, martial law would not be lifted and he alone would decide when, if ever, elections would be held.

The State Department, which seems intent on encouraging the Greek fascists' assertion that the US needs them more than they need the US, gave the Senate a rosy picture of progress towards democracy in Greece with all but 300 political prisoners freed. But this did not allay its concern, and Senators Lowenstein and Moose were sent to Greece in February 1971 to investigate. The State Department's assertion on prisoners' releases was untrue, the senators said: at least 60 were still in exile in isolated places, 345 in concentration camps and 350 in prisons. They found reason to believe torture was practised. The police were still arresting people without warrants, detaining them for long periods and trying them, when at all, by courts-martial. Elections had not even been promised and martial law was still in effect.

The picture in truth is much grimmer, for the Junta is digging its heels in; even the mildest critics are still being rooted out of the state machine; the junta is inculcating fascist ideology into the minds of school children and youth, strangling the press and tramp-

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ling on the rights and livelihoods of workers, peasants and small business people. The burden of military expenditure brings greater impoverishment to the working people and peasants, whilst the Greek and foreign monopolies grow richer.

The growing industrial working class is fighting against the effects of fascist policies and never a day passes without demands on wages and conditions being put forward. Numerous decisions for stoppages of work have been taken and in Serres recently building workers went on strike. The resistance of other sections is seen in a variety of forms from the refusal of political figures to collaborate with the junta, the mass demonstrations of young people at cinemas in Athens last December, bomb explosions, and 'texts' written by bourgeois and communist writers. The legal press continues to criticise the regime despite the prosecution of one paper after another under the new Press Law. The illegal resistance press still circulates.

But the struggle of the Greek people is weakened by lack of unity among the anti-dictatorship forces and the weakness of the resistance organisations and the Communist Party. Whilst there is often unity in action on the job and objectively the possibility exists of anti-dictatorship unity, said the Communist Party recently, it 'comes up against the fact that the leaderships of the bourgeois parties are guided to one degree or another by anti-communism and aim at solutions in accordance with their own class and narrow party interests.' Furthermore, they are held back in the immediate struggle because of their concern to ensure that the Greek people are kept in their place and have little say in determining their future once the junta has been dealt with.

The period ahead will be one of hard struggle to overcome these problems, and international solidarity will be more necessary than ever before. The fight to save the political prisoners is a key one and not easy. The junta intends to perpetuate the system of holding political hostages until they die; this is clearly shown by its refusal to release ten women political prisoners held for four years without charge or trial. Instead they have been sent to lonely villages in the Peloponese where they are cut off from relatives and friends. In the prisons, very sick men and women, including well known fighters of the National Resistance and patriots from the new resistance to the junta, are enduring a slow death.

Solidarity campaigns have already forced the Greek dictatorship to free some of its political opponents and have prevented death sentences in military trials. Still more can be achieved. But there is no time to be lost, no margins for illusions. Despite the US

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Senators' report on the horrors of the Greek dictatorship and their 'discovery' that the US Embassy in Athens was an apologist for the regime (!), they also found, 'that the United States had achieved the military objectives that it sought by giving aid to its partner . . . Greece was a reliable ally in a Mediterranean increasingly hostile to the United States. They did not recommend that arms shipments be stopped' (*Economist*, March 13, 1971). Solidarity with the Greek people in the fight to free all the political prisoners and bring down the junta is closely linked with the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of the Mediterranean and Middle East area and our own fight for peace.

ATTACK ON OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Elaine Woolston*

THE Immigration Bill carefully points out that students coming to Britain are not affected by its discriminatory measures. This is because the increasing number of students coming here from developing countries was slashed by the Labour Government in 1967. Not surprisingly the Tory Government has already announced that they are reluctant to reverse this decision.

The Robbins Committee report on Higher Education in 1963 said:

> The presence here in institutions of higher education of students from abroad is widely regarded as valuable, and rightly so in our judgement. It fosters a sense of international community on both sides. It encourages a valuable give-and-take. The connections to which it gives rise are not without their diplomatic and economic advantages; and where students from developing countries are concerned it provides a helpful contribution to their country's advancement. We should greatly regret a dwindling in the number of overseas students in Britain's universities and colleges.

The number of overseas students in Britain up to 1967 had been increasing; this is in accordance with the general increased demand for education since the second world war. The less developed countries are responsible for the greater part of the increase and students from these countries formed 73 per cent of all overseas students in 1966/67 compared with 49 per cent before the war.

* Elaine Woolston is honorary secretary to the Co-ordinating Committee of Overseas Student Organisations.

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In particular, students from Commonwealth countries other than Australia, Canada and New Zealand have nearly quadrupled in numbers since 1937/39. Commonwealth students formed some 63 per cent of overseas students in Britain in 1966/67, compared with 40 per cent before the war.

The Robbins report recommended that a proportion of 10 per cent of all students studying in Britain should be from abroad. Since 1962 this figure has not been maintained, and from 1967 onwards there has been a dramatic decrease in overseas students. By 1969 it had fallen to five per cent.

The drop since 1967 was caused by the Labour Government's decision to increase fees for overseas students. The increases were from £70 to £250 for overseas students in universities, that is by 250 per cent, and at varying rates for students at colleges of further education, in some cases by as much as 400 per cent.

Immediately following the announcement of the increase, a nation-wide campaign was launched against it, in colleges and universities, amongst students, administrators and teaching staff, all of whose organisations opposed it in their various ways. The news of the increase was received with varying degrees of dismay and outrage in other countries whose students were to be affected.

In response to calls made by the Radical Student Alliance, the Co-ordinating Committee of Overseas Student Organisations and many leading students' unions in the north of England, 7,000 students took part in a lobby of the House of Commons—the biggest of its kind since the war. At the same time a representative meeting called by the National Union of Students at Central Hall, Westminster, was packed to overflowing. A further call for a National Day of Student Action was made and the response was one of strikes, demonstrations and mass meetings in colleges throughout the country: 170,000 students participated. In the House of Commons a record number of 40 Labour MPs ignored a three-line whip and refused to vote against a Conservative motion criticising the Labour Government's increase. This was moved by Mr Reginald Maudling MP; and Mr W. R. van Straubenzee MP—now in office as Under Secretary of State for Education and Science—figured as a key speaker in the debate.

In spite of the wave of protest caused by that first increase, just over a year later the Department of Education and Science issued a circular advising local education authorities to increase hostel charges for overseas students to the 'full economic cost', which was variously calculated at amounts up to £14 10s. per week. As with

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the increase in fees, no consultation preceded the announcement.

These attacks on overseas students have been all too successful in deterring students from coming to study in Britain. In 1966/67 the figure for overseas students studying here, though already below the 10 per cent level of 1962, was numerically the highest ever at 35,230 (this figure represents the number of overseas students at universities and colleges of further education). In 1967/68, following the increase in fees, it went down to 30,388, and in 1968/69 was 29,703. Provisional figures for 1969/70 (nearer 32,000) may mark the extent of the damage.

The general rise in the cost of living coupled with these discriminatory fees and charges has made the cost of studying in Britain for students from poorer countries almost prohibitive. There are not enough places in the universities in their home countries—indeed many of the faculties simply do not exist—and these are the very countries where the need for qualified people to help in their development is so vital.

The British Government's policy favours students coming from wealthier backgrounds, who may be more ready to aspire to the image of the 'English gentleman' than to ally themselves with the working class traditions which former generations of overseas students have sometimes supported. This same policy is one of isolating British students from the healthy exchange of ideas and experiences between people from different backgrounds, which as an important part of college life is being lost. Such a situation is perhaps aimed at persuading the British student to adapt to broiler house conditions of narrow study and examination success, about which there is already growing concern.

The discriminatory scale of fees for overseas students remains in force today, reinforced by these other measures. The proportion of students from poorer families, especially from those countries which Britain has historically exploited, appears to be continuing to fall. Now that the Tories, who made a point of opposing these measures when they were first introduced, are themselves in office, we have an opportunity and therefore a duty to resume action on this issue. The Co-ordinating Committee* is circulating a petition to Mr W. R. van Straubenzee MP, demanding that he seriously reconsider the position of overseas students in Britain, and it is hoped that many students will raise the issue in their colleges amongst students and staff.

* Co-ordinating Committee of Overseas Student Organisations, 376 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

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Kremlinologists Exposed (2)

THOSE STARVING RUSSIANS

Andrew Rothstein

THIS was a heading very common fifty and more years ago, directly the landowners and capitalists lost power in Russia. Some people think: 'We have changed all that.' Not at all.

The Soviet population as a whole is 'worse off than it was before the revolution' in terms of food, says 'the distinguished Sovietologist, Professor Richard Pipes' (*Sunday Times*, February 17). Arguing for the latest Defence White Paper, a *Daily Telegraph* editorial (February 18) refers to the 'vast forces' which the Russians 'are starving themselves to maintain'. The Soviet leadership must be 'desperately worried' at what happened in Poland lately—not, of course, because of solidarity with a socialist country for which Russian and Polish workers together fought many battles, from 1905 onwards, but because of 'its own troubles over consumer goods' (*Tribune*, February 19). When it is said in the West that Soviet consumers are getting a 'new deal' under the ninth five year plan, for 1971 to 1975, 'the claim is exaggerated' (*Economist*, February 20). And so forth.

Yet here are some striking characteristics of a starving people. The death-rate for infants under 12 months in 1913—when there certainly were vast masses of underfed subjects of the Tsar—was 269 per 1,000. In 1926-27 it was 174. In 1969 it was 26 (Central Statistical Department's *Annual*, 1970, p. 31). Average expectation of life figures were 31 for men and 33 for women in 1896-97: they don't exist for the years just before the first world war, but judging from the fact that mortality for both sexes was 32.1 per 1,000 in 1896-1900 (*Russian Year Book*, 1913, p. 63) and 30.2 per 1,000 in 1913 (Central Statistical Department's *Annual*, p. 31), the life figures couldn't have changed a great deal. By 1926-27 they were 42 and 47 respectively, and in 1968-69 they were 65 for men and 74 for women. A long time dying?

Of course the Soviet health service has done a great deal, not only at every stage of life from school to old age, but also by virtually eliminating epidemics like plague, cholera, malaria and smallpox. Yet the best medical attention could not wipe out the effects of systematic underfeeding, much less 'starvation'. So let us look at the figures of *consumption per head of the population*, before the

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revolution and now—always bearing in mind that there were numerically small classes who consumed a vast proportion of foodstuffs and other necessities in Tsarist days. On the other hand, 'the Russian peasant passed an existence of privation in everything except vodka. His body was roughly clad. Bare necessities, reduced to a minimum, supported life' (*The Times Book of Russia*, 1916, p. 220); 'the lower classes live in unspeakable poverty and destitution' (Baedeker's *Russia*, 1914, p. liv); and even in St. Petersburg, then the capital—wrote Harold Williams, the *Daily Chronicle* correspondent—the industrial workers 'live poorly at the best . . . on herring, black bread and tea, with various additions proportioned to their earnings' (*Russia of the Russians*, 1914, pp. 420-1)—and the earnings weren't much.

Consumption per head (in kilograms)

	1913	1960	1969
Meat, poultry, fats	29	40	47
Milk and milk products	154	240	304
Eggs	48*	118*	148*
Fish and fish products	6.7	9.9	15.8
Sugar	8.1	28.0	37.8
Potatoes	114	143	131
Vegetables	40	70	76
Bread, flour and their products	200	164	149

* Number consumed

Are they 'starving'? Are they 'worse off' than in Tsarist days? Have the Soviet leadership grounds for being 'desperately worried'? They certainly want more meat and vegetables to come on the market—and under the new five year plan both collective (co-operative) and state farms will get bigger deliveries to make this possible: tractors (575,000 by 1975, as against 459,000 last year), mineral fertilisers (90 million tons as against 55 million last year) and lorries (1,100,000, as against 525,000 last year). There were over 22 million acres of drained land last year; another 12½ million acres will be added by 1975—and irrigated land, over 23 million acres last year, will exceed 30 million by 1975: both these measures adding greatly to the most productive areas.

No, the preamble to the Directives has not 'exaggerated' when it lays down that the 'main task' of the plan 'is to ensure a considerable rise in the material and cultural level of the life of the people.' It is those '-ologists' who see their main function in life as picking holes in Soviet plans and proposals, for fear that socialism —the real kind—should become too popular, who have exaggerated, as so often since 1917.

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Fifty Fighting Years (3)

TESTING TIME OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

R. Palme Dutt

THE sharp turns and transformations of world events associated with the second world war, and indeed the whole developing war crisis from 1931 to 1945, brought the severest test of the judgement of political spokesmen of every outlook. The record of *Labour Monthly* throughout this testing time stands up to comparison with that of any other spokesman or periodical, and in the light of the known historical facts can now be seen to have been more accurate than most in realistic assessment and prediction.

The second world war is conventionally treated by British historians (and by those who follow in their wake) from the customary self-centred viewpoint of British experience, as having taken place from 1939 to 1945, because this is the period during which Britain was involved. But in fact the war crisis, developing out of the world economic crisis of 1929-33, extended continuously from its first phase in the Far East in 1931, with the Japanese invasion of the North Eastern Province (Manchuria, so called) of China and the 1932 bombing of Shanghai; then to Africa in 1935 with the Italian fascist invasion of Ethiopia; to Europe in 1936, with the aggression of German and Italian fascism against the Spanish Republic; to the whole of China in 1937 with the Japanese seizure of Peking and invasion of the main cities; to Central Europe in 1938 with the German seizure of Austria and the Western Munichite betrayal of Czechoslovakia; to all Western and Central Europe in 1939, with the war involving Britain, France, Germany and Poland; to the extension of the war in Western Europe in 1940 with the German occupation of Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland and France; and finally to the full world war, with the participation of the two principal world powers, and reaching to every continent from 1941 to 1945.

1. *Mobilisation of the United Front Against the Fascist War Offensive*

Thus the test of the response to the war crisis needs to be measured, not merely in relation to the events of 1939-45, but in relation to the whole development from 1931 to 1945. Here the record of

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Labour Monthly can challenge comparison with any of the contemporary expressions in the considerable degree of correctness of judgement and warning at each successive stage of the war crisis. 'Not suddenly,' as our journal proclaimed in January 1937, 'but by a continuous progression since 1931 we are entering into general war.' Each successive stage of the advance which took the specific form of the fascist war offensive, with the practical complicity of the Western imperialist powers sabotaging the machinery of collective security and assisting fascist rearmament and aggression, was successively highlighted; and warning was given of the next extending stage to which each capitulation would lead. In particular, the key responsibility of British foreign policy in facilitating the advance of the fascist war offensive was brought out from the beginning. Already in June 1933, attention was called to 'the relationship of British foreign policy to German fascism', and the National Government's 'continuous sustenance and assistance to Hitlerism', demonstrated by its proposals, immediately after Hitler came to power, to increase German armaments and reduce French armaments. At the same time *Labour Monthly* played an active part, not only to expose and warn, but to mobilise and organise opposition to the fascist war offensive. The first *Labour Monthly* Conference on 'The Capitalist Offensive and War' was held in April 1932. In June 1935, in the same month as the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of the National Government which accorded Nazi Germany 100 per cent equality with Britain in submarines, the *Labour Monthly* Delegate Conference for 'The United Front Against Fascism and War' rallied 257 delegates from 150 organisations, including 66 from trade unions, 42 from Co-operatives, 40 from Labour Parties, 37 from youth organisations, 34 from local anti-fascist and anti-war united front bodies, 32 from Independent Labour Party organisations, 28 from women's organisations, and 17 from Communist Party organisations. By February 1936, the warning was sounded that

> the war-making forces in the world situation, both in Germany and also in the dominant reactionary circles in Britain and France, are advancing their offensive against the line of collective security . . . The key to the world situation lies at present in London. It is the National Government and the Bank of England that are the secret base of support of the Hitler-Schacht Government.

A powerful series of articles by prominent representatives, varied in political affiliation, but rallying in support of unity and collective security against the fascist war offensive, reinforced this campaign which our journal was voicing month by month. In September 1936,

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Norman Angell; in October Romain Rolland; in the same issue Aneurin Bevan on 'Problems of Labour Unity', advocating an 'alliance' of the Labour Party and the Communist Party, and Ted Hill on 'Problems of Trade Unionism'; in November Harold Laski, and in December H. N. Brailsford on the Edinburgh Labour Party Conference and its supine acceptance of the National Government's complicity with the German-Italian fascist aggression against Spain; in January 1937, J. A. Hobson on 'The Economics of a People's Front', and G. D. H. Cole on 'The United Front and the People's Front', and in February Stafford Cripps on 'The United Front'.

In February 1937, the sixth *Labour Monthly* Conference, devoted to 'Problems of Unity and the People's Front', with three main reports from Harold Laski, Harry Adams and G. D. H. Cole, assembled 431 delegates from 246 organisations, including 186 from trade union organisations, 101 from socialist organisations (Socialist League, ILP and CP), 54 from women's organisations, 52 from Labour Party organisations.

2. *Munich—The Path to War*

'With 1938 we are entering the Great Divide in the world situation,' was the estimate expressed by our journal in January 1938. Again the key role of Britain was emphasised.

> The flames of the furnace are rising high all around us, and as the flames rise higher, the real role of the British National Government—in the guise of pouring oil on troubled waters, in reality pouring oil on the flames—stands out ever sharper and clearer. *In the chain of events leading to a new world war every link in the chain leads back to the National Government* (March 1938).

Again in April, under the title 'Britain's War Plan' the declaration was made: 'As in 1914, the decisive force which is opening the gates to war is Britain.' September, it was affirmed, would prove 'the critical month'.

This estimate of the direction of events in 1938 was proved by the outcome in the Munich betrayal of September 30, 1938, when Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini united to carve up Czechoslovakia for the benefit of Hitler, and President Benes accepted the dictation of the West rather than save the independence of Czechoslovakia by the aid of the Soviet Union. Munich was the decisive step to war. 'Britain destroyed the dykes of peace at Munich. That is the history of 1938 in a nutshell' (January 1939).

Today many seek to claim they saw through Munich at the time. But at the critical moment, in that tumultuous scene in parliament

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on September 28, 1938, when Chamberlain waved the note conveying Hitler's invitation to him to come to Munich, all the Conservative, Labour and Liberal representatives, in a common access of hysteria, stood up to wish him 'God-speed'; the sole dissentient voice came, not from Churchill (who sat glumly silent), but from the Communist MP, William Gallacher, who declared in the midst of the delirium that he 'could not be a party to what is going on here' and proclaimed opposition to 'the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia'.

The effectiveness of the Marxist analysis which *Labour Monthly* voiced, not only to see through Munich at the time, but to predict it in advance, and even to predict the further consequence in the critical conditions of the 'we stood alone' situation of 1940, received a notable expression on the platform of the Fifteenth Communist Party Congress at the Birmingham Town Hall in a speech of the Editor of *Labour Monthly* on September 18, reproduced in our issue of November. Since the words were spoken extempore with no prepared text, the passage containing the prediction was only discovered subsequently by a comrade working over the shorthand notes of the proceedings for the Congress Report, and this key passage was included in the printed Report, from which the text was reprinted in our journal. The circumstances which gave rise to this position may now be explained. An artificial atmosphere of war hysteria was whipped up by every governmental device to give the people the impression that the country was on the edge of war over Czechoslovakia, so as to make the real strategy of the betrayal of Czechoslovakia appear as a sudden welcome relief and a triumph for peace. Trenches were dug; gas-masks were distributed; children were evacuated into the country. While the Communist Congress, meeting in the midst of this, adopted a firm and clear line on Chamberlain's policy and Czechoslovakia, this atmosphere of war hysteria, deliberately created by the Government to conceal its real strategy for the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, had some effect on the atmosphere of the Congress; and a proposal was advocated by some comrades that a manifesto should be issued declaring that the country was likely to be at war within a few days, and that this statement was the last guidance the Party was giving to its members for this imminent war. Over this proposed manifesto a battle developed behind the scenes; down in the basement of the Town Hall the controversy took place in an informal consultation of five active comrades before it came to any committee of the Congress; Pollitt, Gallacher and Rust tenaciously fought for such a manifesto; the minority viewpoint was even more tenaciously fought for by Dutt and

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Salme Dutt, arguing that the issue of such a manifesto would make the Party a laughing stock as having become a victim of the Government's trick to delude the people. In the midst of this heated controversy Dutt was suddenly called to the platform as it was his turn to speak in the Congress debate; and so it came about that, with this controversy ringing in his head, he broke out with this declaration from the Congress platform:

> No one who has followed the events of the past week can fail to see that the Government has been deliberately encouraging a certain war atmosphere, an atmosphere similar to that of 1914. The war crisis is real enough. But the Government is playing a double game in this. It is using the war crisis to stage a deception. They are spreading everywhere a picture that the issue of war is the issue, that tomorrow we may find Britain, France and the Soviet Union at war with Germany. That is the picture being put in the minds of the people. Speculation spreads as to what will we do then, and has also affected members of our Party.
>
> Why is the Government concerned to spread this? Is it because they intend to make such a united stand? That is the last thing they mean to do if they can help it. It is the last thing Hitler wants to put himself up against. If there were such a united stand, it would mean, not war, but peace.
>
> But their aim is on this basis to smash the idea of the Peace Front by associating it in the minds of the people with war. Their aim is on this basis to put across their policy of betraying the Peace Front, betraying Czechoslovakia, betraying peace, and to put it across in such a way that it is received as a triumph for peace, that Chamberlain is the saviour of peace.
>
> If Chamberlain wins, if he succeeds in breaking the Peace Front by putting forward his policy as the triumph of peace, then, when the bells of peace are ringing over his victory, the real menace begins. If Chamberlain's policy, which will be celebrated as a policy of peace, goes through, then Fascism, enormously strengthened in Europe, will at last be able to turn its forces upon the democracies, and the British people will then have to fight all the same, but under immeasurably worse conditions.
>
> These are the frank realities of the situation, as against all speculation.

By the spring of 1939, after Hitler had seized the whole of Czechoslovakia, the deception of Munich was manifest in the sight of all.

3. *Diplomatic Manoeuvres of 1939*

Under the title 'The Hour of Awakening' our journal declared in April, after Chamberlain's complaint that he had been deceived at Munich: 'Chamberlain has reached a point at which he can only seek to escape the charge of criminal treason by pleading licensed lunacy.' Aesop's fable of the lion cub was recalled.

> For six years Britain has fostered its lion cub, Hitler, in the hope of having a fine hefty lion to let loose on the Soviet Union. The lion has now grown up, and the most critical moment of British policy is here. How to ensure that the lion will do its duty and not prefer the soft flesh of its keeper . . . The

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> appropriate means of pressure must be found to force the lion to do its job. Hence desperate rearmament; but that alone is not enough; the whip is not yet strong enough for the lion. Therefore it is entirely in keeping that at this moment British policy under Chamberlain should appear to make a sudden turn, and should make the most positive demonstrations of a possible linking up with the Soviet Union, France and the United States against Hitler. This may go much further in the coming period: exchanges of missions and representations, cordial references in speeches, Chamberlain drinking the health of Litvinov—everything short of a clear binding alliance and engagement. All this is not yet a change of policy. It is the whip for the lion (April 1939).

In this situation of complicated diplomatic manoeuvres it became necessary in July, under the title 'Illusions and Realities', to expose the new 'illusions far exceeding the old Munich manoeuvres', spread by British official and semi-official spokesmen, 'that Chamberlain and the protagonists of Munich are now moving, even if with disconcerting slowness and hesitations, to the full policy of the Peace Front and to full collaboration with the Soviet Union.' The real significance of the guarantees to Poland, Romania, Greece and Turkey, but not to the Baltic States ('madness,' as Lloyd George said, without a military treaty with the Soviet Union); the rejection of the Soviet proposal of April 15 for a pact of mutual military assistance (demanded by 87 per cent of public opinion, according to the newspaper polls); the protracted slowness and practical sabotage of the negotiations with the Soviet Union: all showed that the real change of policy had not yet taken place, and that the old conceptions were preventing the formation of the Peace Front, or mutual military pact of Britain, France and the Soviet Union with equal reciprocal obligations, which could alone have barred the way to Hitler's further aggression and saved peace. The article by R. F. Andrews on 'The Anglo-Soviet Negotiations' in the same issue powerfully demonstrated this analysis.

With this analysis of Chamberlain's real strategy in 1939 readers were well equipped to understand the significance of the counter-stroke which smashed the plans of the Munichites, the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of August 23. In a rapid editorial 'Plain Words on the Crisis', written at the moment of going to press, the September issue described the significance of the Pact as having inflicted 'the heaviest defeat' on 'the whole policy of Chamberlain' and 'disrupted the camp of counter-revolution'. The Munichite dream of a four-power anti-Soviet bloc of Britain and France with fascism, which would have meant the most serious danger for the whole future of mankind, had been smashed. But there was no room for illusions as to the consequences of the refusal of the Peace

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Front which had made necessary the Pact as the second-best alternative.

> Nothing is to be gained by minimising the seriousness of the situation, which is the consequence not of the Soviet Union's policy, but of Chamberlain's refusal of the Peace Front. The outcome of Chamberlain's policy after strengthening fascism has neither achieved its counter-revolutionary aims, nor has it won the protection of the Peace Front; instead, it has left the British people exposed to the ever-closer menace of war under the most unfavourable conditions.

The declaration of war by the British and French Munichite Governments against Germany which followed immediately was thus not against fascism nor against fascist aggression, which they had tolerated and in practice assisted throughout all the preceding six years, nor even for the professed reason for the defence of Poland, on whose behalf they did not stir a finger, but against Hitler's Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union. This was indeed implicit in Chamberlain's speech accusing Hitler of 'perfidy', and explicitly recognised in the official governmental apologia, *The British Case*, by Lord Lloyd, with a preface by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, in which it was stated that 'the great apostasy' of Hitler was the Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union.

4. *Problems of the Left and War 1939-41*

In consequence the peculiar character of this phase of the war presented a tactical problem for the anti-fascist left in Britain and France. At the outset there was unanimity of Marxist opinion on the left, as expressed in the Communist Party's manifesto of September 2, for the fight on two fronts: military struggle against Hitler and political struggle against Chamberlain. But the first fortnight of September rapidly showed that the fight on two fronts was at that stage an illusion, since there was no military battle of the British and French forces against Hitler. As the Nazi General Keitel subsequently testified in the Nuremberg trial, at the time when the German forces were tied up in Poland, there were only five German divisions in the West to face the Anglo-French military superiority of 110 divisions; the generals had stated to Hitler that if Britain and France attacked there would be no alternative to surrender; but Hitler had told them not to worry, since Britain and France would not attack. Hence it became clear by mid-September that it would be necessary to change the tactical line to meet the realities of the situation of the phoney war; the anti-fascist feelings of the people were being misused for very different aims, which soon

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revealed themselves in relation to the winter war in Finland. The fight for this necessary change of line, initially from a minority viewpoint, was opened in mid-September, and eventually won majority support (the fable of anti-communist historians that this fight for the change of line was initiated on 'instructions from Moscow' following the return of a British comrade from Moscow, is incorrect; the fight in the central leadership for the change of line was initiated on September 15; the comrade in question returned on September 25). Under these conditions the production of the October *Labour Monthly*, the first after the outbreak of war, presented a special problem. As an organ of left unity, *Labour Monthly* has abstained from becoming involved in inner-party controversies of the Communist Party, whose proper place of ventilation is in the press and democratic machinery of that party, and has similarly regarded it as a duty, while promoting a broad front, never to let itself be used as an organ of opposition to the policy of the organised movement of revolutionary Marxism represented by the Communist Party. In mid-September it was already politically clear that the line would have to be changed; but until agreement was reached on such a change, the official policy was still that of the statement of September 2. The problem was solved in the October issue with the editorial 'Marxism and the War', which gave a careful objective analysis of the events leading to the war, the role of Hitler and of Chamberlain, and the 'contradictory elements' in the resultant 'complex situation' to find the path corresponding to the interests of 'the working class and democratic anti-fascists in relation to this war'. After the policy issue had been cleared by October, *Labour Monthly* from November onwards was able to give its full and outspoken treatment of all the strategic and political issues arising, both in the international situation and in Britain, at each stage of the war.

The keen attention of readers to this Marxist treatment and discussion of all the issues of the war and the international situation was shown in the rapid rise in circulation during the war years, in face of many obstacles of paper shortage and restrictive orders. This remarkable rise was not, as is sometimes supposed, a development of the situation after June 1941, representing the enthusiasm for British-Soviet co-operation. The rise, beginning in January 1939, reached a net sale of 7,000 in September 1939, 10,469 in January 1940, 20,000 in December 1940, and 30,000 by May 1941. Paper rationing became the limiting factor. Paper allocation was based on one-sixth of the pre-war weight of paper consumed. To meet this the magazine was reduced by the beginning of 1942 to pocket

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size in very small type in double columns on the page. To spread the net circulation even further, by July 1943, blue air-mail paper was used as the thinnest, with the colour to prevent the print showing through ('a marvellous device,' as one of London's leading optical surgeons declared, 'to ruin the eyesight of the left'). These tiny war-time volumes of *Labour Monthly* from 1942 to 1946, with minute type on wafer-thin blue paper, are still widely believed in many countries overseas to have been an illegal war edition. By this means a circulation of 55,000 was reached, but it was deemed not wise to publish the figures any more, to avoid rousing too much interest of higher authority (indeed, a prosecution was threatened, and only averted by influential representations, on suspicion of excess use of paper). But a hint may be gathered from the Manager's answer to a question of a reader in February 1946: 'Why still the small type and blue paper?', that it was because otherwise 'nine-tenths of our readers would be unable to obtain copies.'

More than ever in the conditions of the war *Labour Monthly* combined its role of political expression on every development and issue with active participation to help to mobilise and organise the broad democratic movement. In February 1940 the *Labour Monthly* Delegate Conference on 'Labour and the War' with W. H. Thompson as Chairman, was attended by 878 delegates elected by 379 working class organisations, representing a membership of 340,000. *Labour Monthly* Discussion Groups began to be organised, at first spontaneously by local initiatives, and extended to reach, by June 1941, a total of over 250 Discussion Groups in localities all over the country, with the sending out of regular duplicated discussion material. After D. N. Pritt, KC, had been expelled from the Labour Party Executive in March 1940, for his endeavour to save the Labour Party from its folly over Finland, he became a regular contributor and co-operator in the work of the journal, and continues today an honoured and highly valued member of the Editorial Board.

In October 1940, *Labour Monthly* published the Manifesto calling for the People's Convention, with 500 signatories drawn from the widest range of the working class and progressive movement, and preparing the broadest front of left-wing working class and progressive co-operation. The People's Convention in January 1941 assembled 2,234 delegates representing 1,304 organisations, with a membership of 1,200,000, as well as many distinguished individuals (including incidentally Indira Nehru, now Indira Gandhi, Premier of India, and today confirmed in her office in the elections of March 1971 by a more than two-thirds majority in an electorate of 270

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millions). The alarm of authority was immediately aroused, and reflected in the wide publicity in the mass popular organs. 'The people are beginning to turn to the Communist Party' warned the *Daily Mirror* on January 13. The 'enthusiasm and assent', complained the *Daily Herald*, 'puts even the Labour Party at a disadvantage.' A full-scale offensive at every level of governmental and press publicity and pressure was launched against the People's Convention. The BBC tried to blacklist artists and personalities who had participated. The organ of the Communist Party, the *Daily Worker*, which for sixteen and a half months from the outbreak of war had been left untouched (with boasts of this as a demonstration of continuing freedom in wartime), was banned by order of the Labour Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, nine days after the People's Convention. As part of the campaign against this ban, March *Labour Monthly* came out with a special issue on 'Press Freedom in Wartime', with contributions from Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, H. W. Nevinson and many others.

5. *World War 1941-1945*

By June 1941, a new world situation opened. Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union and Churchill's prompt declaration of co-belligerency, which developed into the British-Soviet Treaty of Alliance, meant that the combined military front with the Soviet Union, which could have checked Hitler's aggression and saved peace in 1939, and for which the left had striven in vain in 1939, was now achieved and acclaimed by all except the Mosleyites and pro-fascists. With the entry of the United States into the war by the end of 1941, and the offensive of Japanese fascism in Eastern Asia, the war had now become a full world war, and, with the partnership of the resistance movements of the people in the countries occupied by Hitler and his quisling satellites, and in the Asian countries occupied by Japanese fascism, the war had taken on the dimensions of a world liberation struggle of the peoples against fascism. There were still many weaknesses and negative factors; the heaviest military brunt was left on the Soviet Union; the advance of colonial liberation was blocked by British imperialism. But the dominant, progressive tide in this new developing world situation was manifest; and the main task became to help forward this progressive battle and advance.

From this point to the end of the war all the efforts of *Labour Monthly* were concentrated to fulfil this main task: to use its influence to seek to clarify the issues and strengthen unity and co-operation

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for the fulfilment of the aims of the world liberation struggle of the peoples against fascism. This involved continuous battle on all the strategic-political issues as they developed in the course of the war. There was no lack of awareness of the double trends in the calculations of the British ruling class, which, alongside the military alliance for the defeat of Hitler, were preparing already from 1942 onwards the cold war after the victory, and were working to limit the Western military active participation in order to increase the burden on the Soviet Union. But the fight against these trends was conducted as a fight against 'reactionary forces' and not against the Governments of the war alliance. Full welcome was accorded to all, from whatever political background, who were genuinely concerned to strengthen British-Soviet co-operation and the aims of the alliance.

Thus on significant occasions during this period, the great anniversaries or landmarks like the Crimea Conference, the pages of *Labour Monthly* were thrown open, not only to old and trusted friends and leading representatives of the trade union and labour movement, but also to many from a different background who would never previously have dreamed of contributing to *Labour Monthly*, but were now glad to express their enthusiasm for the role of the Soviet Union and Soviet armies and for the aims of the alliance and British-Soviet co-operation. In November 1942, the special issue for the Twenty-sixth Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution assembled thirty-six contributions, not only from Beatrice Webb and Bernard Shaw and D. N. Pritt, a wide series of MPs, leading general secretaries of trade unions, the Chairman of the Co-operative Party and the Chairman of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, but representatives of a wide political range like Sir Walter Monckton, distinguished scientists like Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, Sir Richard Gregory, or the President of the Royal Astronomical Society, alongside such old friends as Gordon Childe and J. B. S. Haldane—not to mention Lords and Ladies and Duchesses and titled generals, such as would have made a reader of our journal in the previous phase of the fight against Munich and the phoney war, or the subsequent phase of the cold war, rub his eyes with amazement. Similarly in April 1945, the series on the Crimea Conference outcome included, among others, an earl, a bishop, two viscounts (all active in politics), two titled lieutenant-colonels, as well as from among the MPs representatives as varied as the Tory Quintin Hogg or the National Labour Malcolm Macmillan. Such were the conditions at the height of British-Soviet co-operation, which was soon to receive a chilling blast from the onset of the planned cold war.

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At the same time close attention was given to the new problems of British politics and the labour movement, with the prospects after victory, especially in the series on 'The Problem of Labour Unity' and 'The Future of British Politics'.

With the election in July 1945, the opportunity came for the defeat of Tory reaction. The July issue sounded the call 'All Out for July 5', denounced Churchill's 'indecency of a snap election' endeavouring to repeat the Lloyd George manoeuvre of 1918, and, while regretting that the vote for a Popular Front at the Labour Party Conference had just fallen short of winning a majority by a narrow margin of 95,000 votes, proclaimed the guiding line: 'The victory of democracy in Europe must sound the knell for Tory reaction in Britain.'

6. *The Atom Bomb*

There followed the final phase of the war in the Far East, with the surrender of Japan on August 14, following the Soviet declaration of war on Japan precisely on the pledged date, agreed at Teheran, of August 8, and the American dropping of the two atom bombs to coincide with the pre-determined date of Soviet entry, on Hiroshima on August 6 and on Nagasaki on August 9. The September Notes, written on August 21, within twelve days of the dropping of the atom bombs, not only exposed the myth that these caused the Japanese surrender, since the 'admission of defeat was already established weeks earlier, before any atomic bomb had been dropped, but after the impending entry of the Soviet Union was already fixed with a pre-determined date, when the Japanese Government sued for peace and appealed to the Soviet Union to mediate.' The exposure of this myth of the atom bombs as the cause of Japan's surrender was already made in the *Times* editorial of August 16. But the September Notes went on to survey the whole question of 'The Atomic Bomb and World Power Relations', and to challenge the assumptions which were at that time being widely expressed, that the atom bomb had rendered all other military weapons out of date, and that Anglo-American world supremacy was now established for a whole period ahead on the basis of the Anglo-American nuclear monopoly, with the Soviet Union excluded and reduced to a subordinate position. Against these assertions the September Notes contended (1) that the advance of Soviet science and technique would rapidly break the claim of Anglo-American nuclear monopoly, since 'it has happened more than once before now that reactionary hotheads who have based their calculations on the supposed

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backwardness of Soviet science and technique have had their fingers burnt'; (2) that the supposed Anglo-American nuclear monopoly was also an illusion since it was in reality an American monopoly excluding Britain; (3) that the 'enormous resources' required at the present stage for nuclear development would involve 'an outlay only within the reach of the largest, most highly developed industrial states, such as the United States and the Soviet Union', and that in consequence 'the supposed partnership of "American-British power predominance" would turn to the uttermost helpless dependence of this country on the United States'; (4) that 'the long-term considerations of profound interest for the future' in nuclear development were for its tremendous possibilities for peaceful use, comparable in significance to the response of Marx in 1850 to the portent of the new developments of electric power. All the points of this analysis, made within a few days of the dropping of the atom bombs, have been abundantly confirmed by subsequent experience. In 1948 Professor P. M. S. Blackett, now President of the Royal Society, in his famous *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy* developed this line of analysis with a wealth of expert knowledge, and in his chapter on 'The Decision to Use the Bombs' reached the conclusion: 'The dropping of the atomic bombs was not so much the last military act of the second world war, as the first act of the cold diplomatic war with Russia now in progress.'

BOOKS

Intervention and Revolution
Richard J. Barnet
MacGibbon & Kee, 302 pp.,
45s. (£2.25)

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT feature of this study of American foreign policy since the beginning of the cold war is its author's own links with the policy-making and implementing agencies of Foggy Bottom and the Pentagon. One of the academic recruits of the Kennedy years, he has been a consultant to both the State Department and the Defence Department and since 1963 has been a co-director of the Institute for Policy Studies. His book can be read as an advisory policy study that reflects the search for alternatives and ways out of the impasses and self-defeats into which American interventionist foreign policy has led.

This is no argument for simple adjustments in existing policies, such as enclaves instead of occupation in Vietnam. Mr. Barnet has gone back to the premises on which intervention and counter-insurgency programmes were erected, and has questioned the whole imperial ideology that projected the United States as the international gendarme against revolutions in all countries.

He has examined in some detail the interventions in Greece, Lebanon, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Guatemala, the Congo, Iran, Guyana and elsewhere, and has cited a mass

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of facts and statements that reveal most glaringly the 'arrogance of power' with which American imperialism has acted. A remark by Allen Dulles, former director of the CIA, typifies the attitude:

'. . . we cannot safely limit our response to the Communist strategy of take-over solely to those cases where we are invited in by a government still in power, or even to instances where a threatened country has first exhausted its own, possibly meagre, resources in the "good fight" against Communism. We ourselves must determine when and how to act, hopefully with the support of other leading Free World countries who may be in a position to help, keeping in mind the requirements of our own national security.'

Mr. Barnet dissects the world view of the National-Security Manager, his cross-sectional official whom he asserts is the common type rather than the exception in Washington foreign affairs agencies, the official for whom 'the ultimate bureaucratic dream is the perfect freedom of unlimited power. It is the ability to push a button, make a phone call, dispatch a cable, and know that the world will conform to your vision.' It is a vision of 'world order' over which the US presides as the 'imperial peacekeeper'.

It is the acid with which the author etches his portrait of the National-Security Manager that indicates the sharpness of the differences that have developed in American policy-making circles. It permeates his description of each episode of intervention: the account of how the 'invitation' to intervene in Greece in 1947 was drafted in the State Department in Washington and then presented to a summoned Greek chargé d'affairs; the shifting of strongmen in and out of power in the Dominican Republic, sometimes with a pistol to the head when reluctance was displayed; Kermit Roosevelt sitting in a basement in Teheran, organising and paying demonstrators to oust Mossadeq; the 'strike' in Guyana that undermined Cheddi Jagan's government, when each of thousands of 'strikers' was paid a weekly sum for 12 weeks out of the US Treasury.

Rejecting this kind of 007 scenario for foreign policy, and along with it the theory of 'treating local revolutions as part of a world-wide conspiracy and not as expressions of nationalist feeling and indigenous political sentiment,' the author concludes that there are two imperatives confronting humanity and that the United States must adjust its policies to fit them.

The first of these is that 'the world must be made safe for revolution.' Revolutions are deep-seated and inevitable processes aimed at correcting social imbalances and at changing ruling elements that do nothing about them. Intervention from outside to halt the processes merely increases the impulse toward change, and 'stability' has not been attained in any country where the US has intervened. Where revolutions are justified intervention is to no avail; where they are not justified they peter out without the need to intervene. 'Where the greatest power in the world scares itself with a set of beliefs that have at best only a tangential connection with the reality of revolution, that nation becomes a menace to itself and to others.'

The second imperative, referred to as only 'seemingly contradictory', is that the United States must join with the community of nations 'to attempt the creation of a world environment in which revolution will be unnecessary.' This, in the author's view, must be accomplished through serious

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development programmes for the underdeveloped countries, for which aid would be useless if given to 'corrupt, unimaginative governments'.

Advocating sweeping changes in the political policies of American imperialism, this book has very little to say about imperialist investment, financial and trade policies that have been associated with these. Barnet speaks of 'new institutions for assisting the modernisation of poor countries', but what is left unspoken is the assumption that American interests can go on profiting from this process.

Nevertheless, this is a serious and sharply critical review of the whole pattern of American cold war, aggressive foreign policy, and it is of significance that the author extends thanks to 'many persons' in US governmental and policy-making circles who assisted him in preparing his presentation.

WILLIAM J. POMEROY

For Marx
Louis Althusser
Allen Lane, 272 pp., £2.75
Reading Capital
Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar
New Left Books, 340 pp., £4

LOUIS ALTHUSSER writes in the introduction to *For Marx*: 'Those who impute all our disappointments, all our mistakes and all our disarray in whatever domain, to Stalin, along with his crimes and errors, are likely to be disconcerted by having to admit that the end of Stalinist dogmatism has not restored Marxist philosophy to us in its integrity.'

Althusser, a member of the Communist Party in France and a teacher at the University of Paris, argues that in the field of Marxism the period since 1956 has seen the development in the Communist movement of a theoretical revisionism, most obviously manifested in the partial re-integration of the Marxist science of history into ideological humanism. This argument has involved him in an intellectual struggle with those who (like Roger Garaudy, recently expelled from the French Communist Party for making rightist propaganda) have abandoned Lenin for bourgeois or petty-bourgeois conceptions of the world.

The extension of the themes of pre-Marxist humanism into Marxist theory represents, according to Althusser, a further danger: that the failure of the Communist movement to resolve the problems posed by the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Party may be masked by the presentation of answers which, in effect, represent not a scientific analysis but simply ideological formulae.

Althusser's work aims to establish or re-establish the philosophical foundations of Leninism, and in particular of Lenin's doctrine of the scientific nature of Marxism, a doctrine whose implications for political work and organisation are sketched in *What is to be Done?* In *Reading Capital* Althusser, together with Etienne Balibar, turns to an examination, from the same standpoint of Leninism, of Marx's *Capital*, and to a demonstration of its status as a work of science.

Since the publication in France of *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*, Althusser has extended and in certain respects rectified his theory of the relation of philosophical work to political practice, and has published his conclusions in a work on *Lenin and Philosophy*. But the main arguments of the earlier work remain valid, and indeed, taken together with the work of rectification (itself prompted by criticisms made at a Communist Party Central Committee meeting in 1966), constitute a model of what Marxist philosophy should be: a weapon of the proletarian class struggle, a weapon of revolution.

GRAHAME LOCK

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DOUBLE FOR HALF-CENTURY

OUR Golden Jubilee donations were flowing in magnificently up to the third week of January—typically 'with best wishes and congratulations on your Golden Jubilee,' from Oxford readers. A London group, marking the Jubilee by sending £5 to the fund, were able to add a note saying: 'We have increased our sales from two copies two years ago to nine.'

Then came the interruption, the effects of which on our circulation are the subject of our Editorial Board's statement elsewhere in this issue. The effect on our fund can be seen all too clearly below, where we can record, as February donations, only those which reached us through our bank. Our March total, though also partially at risk of depletion, is already receiving double donations from our many regular contributors and, with their unfailing help, will go some of the way to make up for the losses.

Our Golden Jubilee donations, in face of this all-time low, will have the double job of rescuing the fund from these depths and carrying out its original aim of giving the journal an extra lift in celebration of its half-century of publication.

Some of our readers, aware of the great difficulties imposed on *LM* during the January-March postal stoppage, have made unusual efforts to raise the first of the emergency donations called for by our Editorial Board. These will not be recorded on this fund page, but are being given individual acknowledgements, so that our fund figures in the next few months, during which time we have to try and make good this month's short-fall, will be a true reflection of our readers' ability to bring that total up to its £100 a month target.

Nicola Seyd

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